TR 6624

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منظمة العفو الدولية
國際特赦組織

News Service 097/99

AI INDEX: ASA21/42/99
EMBARGOED FOR 24 MAY 1999

MEDIA ADVISORY

Open letter from Amnesty International to political parties taking part in the June 1999 Indonesian National Parliamentary elections

Amnesty International's Secretary General, Pierre Sané, today urged all political parties and candidates in Indonesia's coming parliamentary elections to recognize the importance of human rights to the country's future political, economic and social development. He stressed politicians' responsibility to promote respect for human rights during the election campaign and urged all political parties to commit themselves to a full program of human rights reform, including:

- Releasing all prisoners of conscience, reviewing the cases of all political prisoners convicted in unfair trials and repealing legislation facilitating the arrest and imprisonment of prisoners of conscience.

- Reviewing all existing legislation to comply with Indonesia's obligations under international treaties. This process could begin by including specific prohibitions on torture, extrajudicial executions and "disappearances" in Indonesian law.

- Abolishing the death penalty. A positive first step would be commuting all death sentences and making a public commitment to carry out no further executions.

- Establishing an independent judiciary in accordance with international standards and pursuing the process of creating a civilian police force trained to uphold international human rights standards.

- Ending impunity for human rights violations by ensuring that all allegations are immediately and impartially investigated and that anyone found responsible is brought to justice before a civilian court.

- Continuing cooperation with the United Nations by ensuring that its recommendations are acted upon and its representatives given full access to monitor the human rights situation in all areas of Indonesia and East Timor.

- Cooperating to ensure a climate free from harassment, intimidation and abuse before and during the June elections and the popular consultation in East Timor on 8 August 1999.

ENDS.../

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To receive a copy of the letter, or to arrange an interview, please call Amnesty International in London, UK, on +44 171 413 5566.

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